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UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH.

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# M E M O R I A L

Relating to the

## UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH.

**T**H E University of Edinburgh was founded in the year 1582. The ground on which the buildings are erected belonged to the Collegiate Church of St Mary in the Fields. It contained the houses of the Provost and Canons of that Church, and a house pertaining to the family of Hamilton, which falling to the crown, was granted to the University. The ground was purchased, and the building begun, in consequence of a mortification made by the Bishop of Orkney, of a certain sum of money for that purpose. Private persons contributed their benefactions ; and, by a charter of King James VI. the Royal Sanction was given to the University, the Magistrates and Council of Edinburgh were declared its patrons, and houses were appointed to be erected for Professors of the several Sciences, and for Students to perform their Exercises therein.

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As the funds were narrow, the fabric advanced slowly, and with many interruptions. A public Hall, a Divinity School, and some other buildings were erected by the year 1617. But these buildings, poor in themselves, seem not to have been carried on according to any regular plan, such as takes place in other Academical Structures which have been erected on more opulent foundations; and hence the whole fabric has a mean, irregular, and contemptible appearance. Some of the houses which were found upon the area when it was purchased were converted, as they stood, into a part of the University-buildings; and many of the schools or teaching-rooms are, at this day, crowded into what was formerly the Marquis of Hamilton's house.

THE period at which this University was founded, was indeed peculiarly unfavourable to such an undertaking. The kingdom was but just beginning to recover tranquillity after great convulsions both in its religious and civil constitution. The Church was newly stripped of that wealth which had contributed so much in former times to the magnificence of Academical Structures; and industry, trade, and manufactures had scarcely begun, at that time, to open the great springs of national affluence and prosperity.

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AT the foundation of the University, accommodation was wanted, and provision was made, for teaching only such Sciences and Arts as were, in that age, thought most necessary. But as more enlarged views of Science and Literature have gradually opened, the number of Professors has, from time to time, been greatly increased; new branches of Science have been cultivated; and it is imagined that the course of Academical education is now as complete in this, as in any University of Europe. Divinity, Church History, the Law of Nature and of Nations, Civil Law, Scotch Law, Anatomy, Theory of Physic, Practice of Physic, Chymistry, Botany and Materia Medica, Midwifery, Mathematics, Civil History and Roman Antiquities, Moral Philosophy, Natural History, Natural Philosophy, Logic and Metaphysics, Rhetoric and Belles Lettres, the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin Languages, are all taught by distinct Professors.

FROM several causes, this University has arisen to a high degree of reputation. The number of Students at present belonging to it is betwixt six and seven hundred. From its situation in Edinburgh, which is the seat of the Courts of Justice for North Britain, it has always been much resorted to by the nobility and gentry of this part of the country. Of late, several persons of very high rank and distinction in the kingdom have committed the education of their sons to the

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University



University of Edinburgh. The complete course of Medical education which it affords, more complete, it is believed, than is to be found in any other University in Europe, aided too by a great Infirmary just adjacent to it, where Clinical Lectures are given by the Professors of Medicine upon the cases of the patients, is one great cause of the concourse of so many Students from all the parts of Great Britain, from Ireland, America, the West Indies, and even from distant parts of Europe, to this seat of Learning.

THE buildings of the University must, on the first inspection, appear to every one to be extremely unsuitable, both to the rank which this University has for several years held, and to the present advancing and improved state of this country. They are so far inferior to all other structures of the same kind in our own, or in other countries, that they cannot fail to prejudice every stranger against Scotland, its education, and its manners. A stranger, when conducted to view the University of Edinburgh, might, on seeing such courts and buildings, naturally enough imagine them to be alms-houses for the reception of the poor; but would never imagine that he was entering within the precincts of a noted and flourishing seat of learning. An area, which, if entire, would have formed one spacious quadrangle, is broken into three paltry divisions, and encompassed partly with walls which threaten  
destruction

destruction to the passenger, and partly with a range of low houses, several of which are now become ruinous, and not habitable. With the exception of one large upper gallery, which has lately been repaired, and made the public library, and of an anatomical theatre, there is no room or building belonging to the University that has any degree of academical decency. The teaching rooms of the Professors are, in general, mean, straitened, and inconvenient; more enlarged accommodation is wanted; and some Professors, whose hours of teaching follow immediately on one another, are obliged to occupy the same room.

THE places to which persons have been much accustomed in their youth, generally remain connected in their imagination with what relates to those places, or has been transacted in them. Palaces and sumptuous edifices are not requisite, indeed, to support the dignity of literature. But, surely, when ideas of poverty, meanness, dirtiness, and darkness, are connected in youth with a literary education, such a debasing association is not likely to favour the proper fruits of education in future life.

THE public buildings in any country are generally expected to bear some proportion to the state of that country: They are supposed to exhibit the public taste, and to correspond to the degree of national advancement



ment in opulence and in arts. A more unfavourable specimen of all these cannot easily be shown, than what is afforded by the University of Edinburgh.

THE progress of improvement, throughout the whole country, has, of late years, been great and remarkable. Various causes have contributed to increase the public wealth and prosperity. An uncommon spirit of vigour, industry, and application to every useful art, has diffused itself through all ranks. No rational scheme has been proposed for the public utility or honour, to which proper attention has not been paid. Undertakings so great and extensive, that some time ago they would have been held impracticable and visionary, are now planned with judgement, and supported with zeal. In Edinburgh, in particular, the great improvements which have been lately made, and are still going forwards, large buildings arising suddenly on all hands, a magnificent bridge, and new streets and squares begun, carry all the marks of a country growing in arts and in industry. The University-fabric alone remains in such a neglected state, as to be generally accounted a dishonour to the city of Edinburgh, and to this part of the kingdom.

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THE Magistrates and Council of Edinburgh, the Patrons of the University, have never been wanting in proper attention to its interest. They have listened to every reasonable demand. They have studied, from time to time, to render the accommodation of the Professors and the students more tolerable; and have, for this purpose, annually expended such sums as their public revenue could afford on these decayed buildings.

BUT these partial reparations can neither remove the inconveniency, nor cover the deformity and meanness of the whole. It has long been thought, and the opinion is now become very general, that it is necessary to rebuild the fabric upon a new plan. And as the Magistrates and Council of Edinburgh are altogether unable to execute such an undertaking, by means either of the funds appropriated for the support of the University, or of the proper revenue of the Community, it has been suggested by many, that application ought to be made to the Public for aid. Several persons of generosity and public spirit have testified their willingness to promote such a measure; and the voice of the public has given encouragement to hope, that if a general subscription were opened, considerable sums might be raised for carrying on an undertaking which redounds so much to the public advantage and honour. This has given occasion to the present Memorial being offered to the public.

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WHAT is proposed, in general, is, to rebuild the fabric of the University according to a regular plan, and in a decent manner, on the ground where it stands at present. The situation is in every respect commodious; the area, containing above three acres, is sufficiently extensive, and would afford one large, free, and open square, around which all the buildings could be placed to advantage.

THE chief object in view, is, to erect those public buildings which are necessary for an University; a Public Hall, a Library, a Musæum, and convenient Teaching Rooms for the several Professors. As there are twenty-one of these, sixteen or eighteen distinct apartments would be required. With respect to dwelling-houses for the Professors, the building of these must depend on the extent of the funds that shall arise. If they shall be such as, besides the necessary academical buildings, to afford houses for the Professors, or at least some assistance for erecting them, and by this means to compleat the whole proposed square, the public would reap this advantage, that the Professors could then more readily, and with much less inconveniency, receive young gentlemen under their immediate care, and lodge them in their houses, than it is possible for them to do at present. But no part of the money subscribed shall be applied towards building houses for Professors, unless sufficient funds be obtained



tained for compleating the public buildings in a decent and proper manner.

IN order that the subscribers may be fully ascertained of the sums which they shall please to contribute being faithfully and properly applied, it is further proposed, that certain Administrators or Trustees shall be named, under whose sole direction every thing shall be placed which relates to the intended buildings, and to the application of the funds that may arise for this purpose.

THE persons proposed to be the Trustees, are, the Lord Provost, the six Magistrates and Deacon Conveener of the Trades of the city of Edinburgh; the Lord Keeper of the Great Seal; the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal; the Lord Register of Scotland; the Lord Justice General; the Lord President of the Board of Police, with one of the Lords of Police to be chosen by the court; the Lord President of the Court of Session, and two of the Senators of the College of Justice to be chosen by the court; the Lord Justice Clerk, and one of the Lords of Justiciary to be chosen by the court; the Lord Chief Baron of Exchequer, and one of the Barons to be chosen by the court; his Majesty's Advocate, and the Solicitor General; the Dean of the Faculty of Advocates, with three Advocates to be chosen by the Faculty; the Keeper of his Majesty's Signet, with two Clerks to the Signet to be chosen by that Society;

Society; the President of the Royal College of Physicians, with one Fellow to be chosen by the College; the Representative of the city of Edinburgh in Parliament; the oldest Minister of Edinburgh, with one of the other Ministers to be chosen by the Ministers of Edinburgh; the Master of the Merchant Company, with one of the Members to be chosen by the Company; the Principal of the University, with one Professor from the Faculty of Theology, one from the Faculty of Law, one from the Faculty of Medicine, and two from the Faculty of Arts, to be chosen by the University.

UNDER the direction of a body of gentlemen so respectable and enlightened, no doubt can be entertained that the most proper measures will be taken for erecting the proposed buildings according to such a plan, and in such a manner as will redound most to the benefit of the University, of the City of Edinburgh, and of the whole united kingdom.





